

# History Highlights

In the days of small sailing ships, North Carolina inlets and sounds attracted seafarers seeking safe haven. Beaufort was one of the first harbors to be designed as a port of entry during colonial times, but along with this distinction came danger. There was the ever-present threat of raids from the sea by hostile nations and pirates such as the infamous Blackbeard. The need for defense was clearly illustrated when, in 1747, Spanish raiders attacked English colonists at Beaufort, captured the town and held it for several days.

To defend this vulnerable coastal region against future attacks from the sea, plans were developed for the construction of four defensive forts along the eastern seaboard, one of which was to be built at Old Topsail (now Beaufort) Inlet. Begun in 1756, the fort (Fort Dobbs) was never completed and the harbor remained defenseless until 1808-09 when Fort Hampton was built on the tip of Bogue Banks. Situated about 300 yards east of the present site of Fort Macon, the small brick-masonry fort protected the harbor for more than a decade. It was later deserted and in 1825 was washed into the inlet by a hurricane.

Construction of the present Fort Macon was begun in 1826. The fort was garrisoned in 1834 and named after North Carolina Senator Nathaniel Macon, who procured the funds to build the fort. A system of stone jetties was constructed in the 1840s to control erosion. This project was initially engineered by Robert E. Lee, who later became General of the Confederate Army.

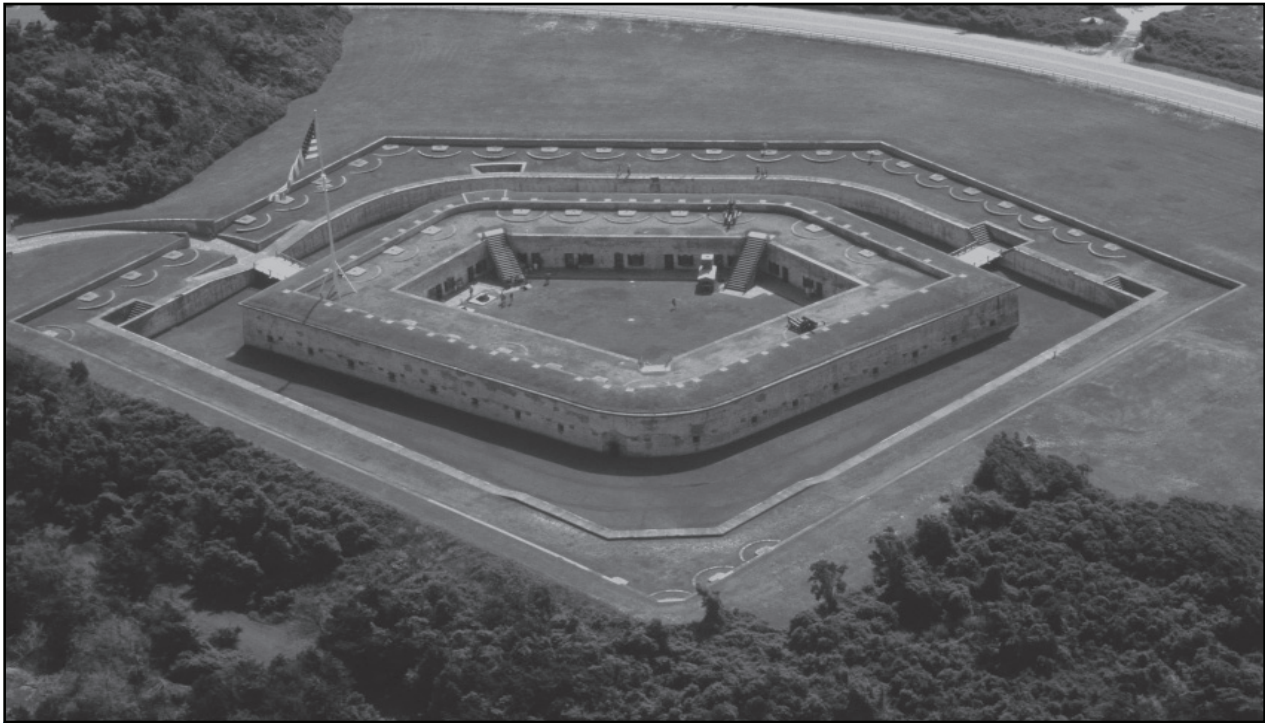
At the start of the Civil War, North Carolina seized Fort Macon. The Confederate force was later attacked in 1862 and the fort fell into Union hands once again. For the duration of the war, the harbor served as a coaling station for Union Navy ships. Fort Macon was a Federal prison from 1867 until 1876, garrisoned during the Spanish-American War and closed in 1903.

Congress offered the sale of Fort Macon Military Reservation as surplus Federal property in 1923. Establishing a system of state parks, North Carolina purchased Fort Macon for one dollar, making it the second state park in 1924. Restored by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934-35, the fort was garrisoned for the last time during World War II.

Situated at the eastern end of the 424-acre park, portions of the fort have been restored to appear as they did during the Civil War.

# Pack A Picnic

Make a day of your visit and pack a picnic. Picnic facilities in the park include outdoor grills (a great place to cook those freshly caught fish), drinking water, picnic tables, shelters and restrooms. Help keep the park clean; place trash in the centrally located containers.



## Catch A Wave Or A Fish

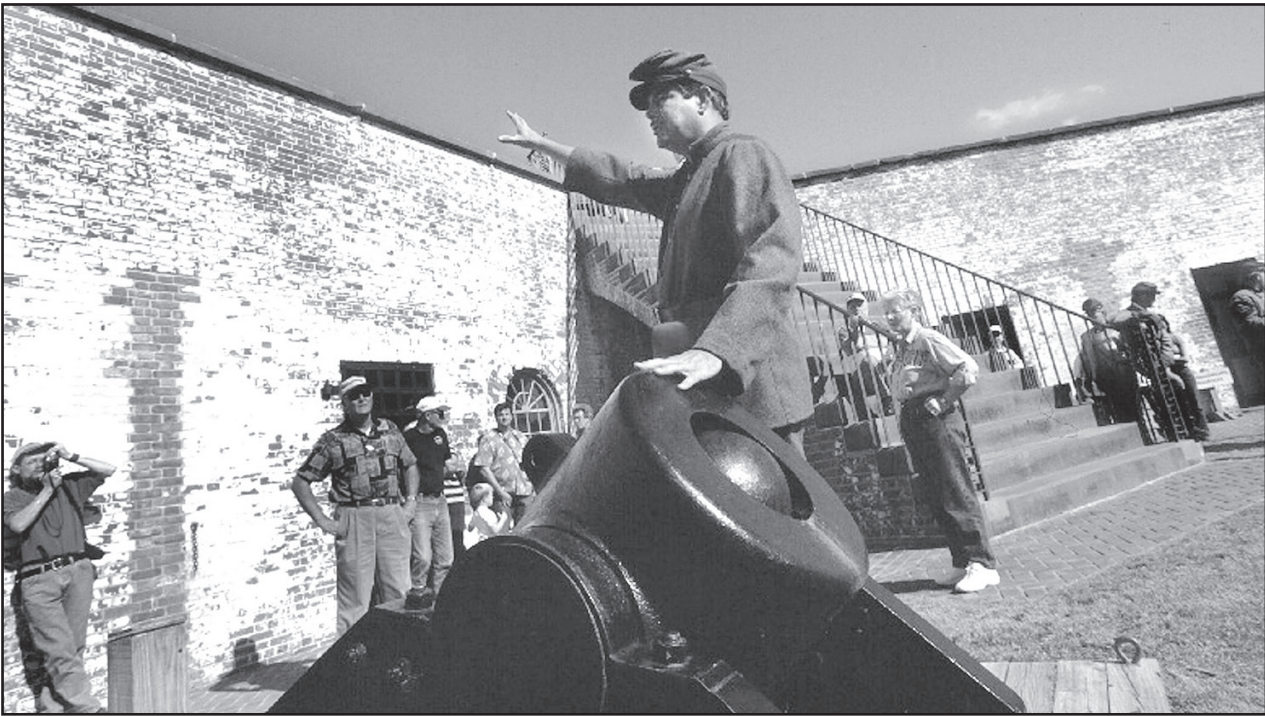
**Swimming:** The beautiful beach is a popular source of recreation at the park. A seaside bathhouse and refreshment stand are open Memorial Day through Labor Day for your convenience and comfort. Lifeguards are on duty for your protection from 10 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day, staff permitting. Because of strong water currents, visitors are encouraged to swim only in the protected area. Surfing is not allowed in protected swimming area.

**Fishing:** Fish are abundant in the inlet and the ocean. Flounder, bluefish, spot, croaker, sheepshead and whiting provide plenty of sport and lots of good eating. Fishing may be enjoyed throughout the year at Fort Macon.

## Nature's Classroom

Fort Macon State Park holds the key to many of nature's best-kept secrets. Unlock the door to nature's classroom and watch the mysteries begin to unfold. Our rangers will guide you on exciting explorations where you'll uncover fascinating natural surroundings and make great discoveries about the world in which we live. Bring our state's rich natural and cultural heritage alive; embark on a learning adventure in Fort Macon State Park and discover the wonders of the coastal environment.

Join a regularly scheduled interpretive program or contact the park office to arrange an exploration for your group or class.



# Wander & Explore

While most visitors to Fort Macon spend their time at the fort or relaxing on the beach, the park can be an excellent introduction to the varied and abundant plant and animal life of the North Carolina coast.

Explore the base of the jetty at low tide or walk the beach in search of mollusk shells washed ashore by the last storm. Sea urchins, sea stars and coral may be spotted on or under rocks or other objects in the shallow water.

Visit the nearby Theodore Roosevelt Natural Area, eight miles west of Fort Macon. This area with extensive maritime forests and freshwater ponds is also the site of the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, an educational facility with a variety of marine exhibits.



## Take a Tour

Five-sided Fort Macon is constructed of brick and stone. Twenty-six vaulted rooms (or casements) are enclosed by outer walls 4.5 feet thick. Other features of the fort include powder magazines, counterfire rooms with cannon emplacements and a wide moat which served to protect the fort when flooded with waters from Bogue Sound. An inner court or parade ground is often the scene of historic re-enactments.

Join a guided tour of the fort or conduct your own following the printed guide available at the fort bookstore. Open daily throughout the year, the restored quarters offer a look into the lives of officers and soldiers.

Exhibits in the museum acquaint you with a vital period in the history of the state and the nation. Four galleries display artifacts from a period of the fort's history: its construction; the War Between the States and the Union army siege; life of the 19th Century soldiers; and garrisons from 1898 through 1946. There is also a "Parade of Uniforms" and a reconstructed, handmade brick fort bake oven and hot-shot furnace (used to heat artillery shells). In addition, the museum has kitchen and commissary exhibits. Also featured is a scale model of the fort, a section of which elevates to show a cross-section of the fort's construction, along with lighted maps, weaponry, enlarged photography, a small video theater, murals of sea battles, cannons in action and military lifestyles. The museum is open daily with the exception of Christmas Day. An adjacent bookstore offers educational materials for your enjoyment.



## Flora & Fauna

**Plant life:** Like other barrier islands, Fort Macon boasts a line of sand dunes covered with sparse stands of sea oats behind the beach. The park's interior is covered by dense thickets of wax myrtle, red cedar, yaupon and live oak. The regularly flooded marshes along the edge of Bogue Sound are dominated by smooth cordgrass while the drier upland margins are covered with saltmeadow cordgrass and other grasses and sedges.

The muddy bottoms of the marshes along the backside of the island are home to oysters and clams. In summer, the diamond-backed terrapin, the only reptile to regularly inhabit estuarine waters along the coast, may be seen in tidal creeks. These rich, regularly flooded estuarine waters are vital to the coastal ecosystem. They supply food for marine organisms and serve as nurseries for economically important fruits of the sea such as crabs, shrimp and other shellfish.

**Animal Life:** Look for a heron or egret roosting in the cedars, or catch a glimpse of a painted bunting in the thickets around the fort. Fort Macon is a great place for birdwatching in all seasons. In summer, gulls and terns may be found feeding in the marine waters or resting on the beach. Late summer migration brings flocks of sanderlings, dunlin and other species to the beach and the thickets come alive with warblers, sparrows and other migrants. In winter, the rocky jetties attract birds more often associated with rocky coasts farther north. Such rarities as purple sandpipers and common eiders may be spotted feeding along the jetties.

# Rules & Regulations

Make your visit to Fort Macon State Park a safe and rewarding experience. Our regulations are posted throughout the park, for the protection of our park and our visitors. Please help preserve our natural resources.

- ❑ The launching or landing of private boats or personal water craft is not permitted.
- ❑ The removal of any plant, animal, rock, or mineral is prohibited.
- ❑ All North Carolina state parks are wildlife preserves. Respect park wildlife; do not disturb the animals.
- ❑ Fishing is permitted only during park hours. All regulations of the North Carolina Marine Fisheries are enforced.
- ❑ Swimming or wading in the inlet is strictly prohibited.
- ❑ Fires are permitted only in designated areas.
- ❑ Do not litter. Help maintain a clean environment for other visitors.
- ❑ Firearms and fireworks are not permitted in the park.
- ❑ The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- ❑ North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.
- ❑ Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet. In addition to inside the fort, pets are not allowed in bathhouse or swimming areas.
- ❑ Camping is not permitted at Fort Macon State Park.
- ❑ Surfing is not allowed in Beaufort Inlet or in the protected swimming area.

# For Your Safety

To prevent accidents, please remember these safety tips.

- ❑ Do not climb or walk on the jetties.
- ❑ Swim only in the protected areas. Swimming or wading in the inlet is extremely dangerous and not allowed.
- ❑ Rip tides, strong currents and Portuguese Man-of-War may create hazardous swimming conditions; consult the lifeguard for safety advice.
- ❑ Prolonged exposure to heat, wind and sunlight may cause sun poisoning and/or dehydration. Bring along sun protection and drink plenty of fluids.
- ❑ To protect against mosquitoes and other insects, bring along insect repellent.
- ❑ Fort Macon was made for war, not safety. Please use caution while exploring the fort.



# Welcome!

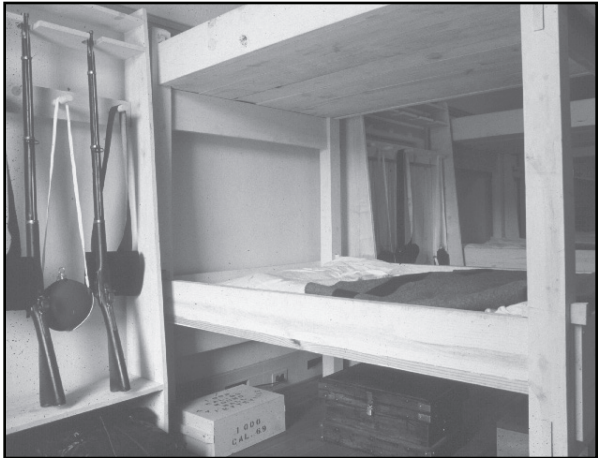
Whether you're looking for fun in the sun, a journey back in time, or simply a chance to enjoy the natural wonders of the sea – you'll find it at Fort Macon State Park.

Just minutes away from Atlantic Beach, Fort Macon offers public access to the surf, sun and sand of the Crystal Coast. But the beach is only the beginning.

Located at the eastern end of Bogue Banks, one of a series of barrier islands along the North Carolina coast, the park is surrounded on three sides by water – the Atlantic Ocean, Beaufort Inlet and Bogue Sound. This area of undisturbed natural beauty is the perfect place to explore the salt marshes and estuaries so vital to the coastal eco-system.

And should nature's bounty ever grow tiresome, there's more. The park is home to a fascinating Civil War fort where you can get close enough to history to feel it.

For the sun worshiper, the naturalist, the history buff... there's something for everyone at Fort Macon State Park.



## Information

To learn more about Fort Macon State Park, contact:

Fort Macon State Park  
P.O. Box 127  
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512  
(252) 726-3775  
denr.dpr.fort.macon@lists.ncmail.net  
www.ncparks.gov

Discover other North Carolina state parks and recreation areas, contact:

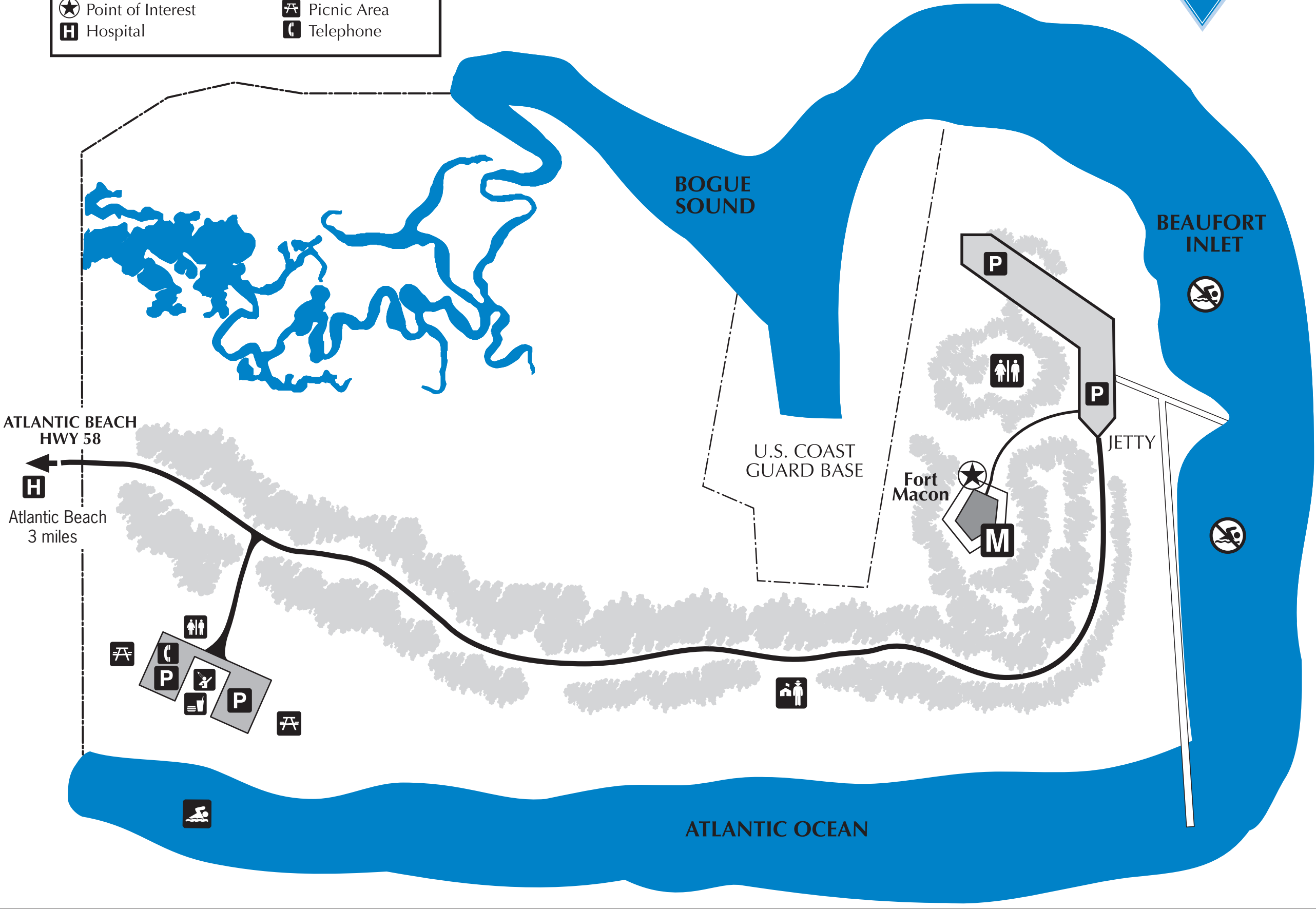
N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation  
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources  
Mail Service Center 1615  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615  
(919) 733-4181

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- Legend**
- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Bathhouse         | Swimming    |
| Concession Stand  | No Swimming |
| Restrooms         | Parking     |
| Museum            | Park Office |
| Point of Interest | Picnic Area |
| Hospital          | Telephone   |

## Fort Macon State Park



N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources



Fort Macon  
State Park

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Fort Macon State Park is located in Carteret County on the eastern end of Bogue Banks. It can be reached by turning South off U.S. 70 in Morehead City, crossing the bridge to Atlantic Beach and turning left on Highway 58 South.

## Park Hours

<b>Fort:</b> 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.,	Closed Christmas Day
<b>Fort Area:</b> October - March,	8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
April, May, September,	8 a.m. - 7 p.m.
June - August,	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
<b>Bathhouse/Swimming Area</b>	
November - February	8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
March - May, September & October	8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
June - August	8 a.m. - 9 p.m.
<b>Lifeguards</b> (Memorial Day - Labor Day)	10 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.